

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CREATE A TASK FORCE TO STUDY WAYS TO REQUIRE INSURERS TO COVER EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS OR DISABILITIES.

WHEREAS, children with developmental delays or disabilities have substantial functional limitations related to mental or physical impairments, including brain trauma; and

WHEREAS, early intervention services for children with developmental delays or disabilities are needed from birth; and

WHEREAS, the earlier children are identified as developmentally delayed or disabled and begin receiving services, the more likely they will be to be able to live independently; and

WHEREAS, families of developmentally delayed or disabled children need early intervention services to support their children's growth and development; and

WHEREAS, the department of health operates a program of early intervention services called the family infant toddler program; and

WHEREAS, the number of infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities is increasing as New Mexico's population grows; and

WHEREAS, early intervention services are generally not covered by health insurance carriers and health maintenance organizations; and

WHEREAS, other states have funded a significant percentage of their overall program support for early intervention services by accessing private health insurance benefits; and

WHEREAS, state funding of quality early intervention services can result in cost savings over time; and

WHEREAS, providers of early intervention services for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities have not received any rate increases for their services since 1997; and

WHEREAS, current rates for services do not adequately support the cost of those services, as determined by a 2003 study conducted by the department of health's family infant toddler program;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of health be requested to create a task force to study ways of assessing the feasibility of requiring that insurers providing individual or group accident and illness insurance policies expand their coverage to early intervention services for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities who are eligible for part C of the Individuals with Disabilities

Education Act; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this task force include representatives from advocacy groups, providers of care to children with developmental delays or disabilities, parents of developmentally delayed or disabled children, the department of health and the insurance division of the public regulation commission, as well as representatives of private health insurance companies and health maintenance organizations operating within New Mexico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the findings of this task force be reported to the interim legislative health and human services committee and the legislative finance committee by their October 2004 meetings; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of health, the chair of the public regulation commission, developmental delay or disability advocacy organizations, providers of family infant toddler program services, the association of developmental disabilities community providers, all health insurance companies and health maintenance organizations operating within New Mexico, the interim legislative health and human services committee and the legislative finance committee.